

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Budget Estimates 2006-2007, 25 May 2006

Question: HS 73

Outcome 1, Output 2

Topic: Sick Leave

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR EVANS asked the Minister for Human Services, upon written notice:

1. With respect to the Child Support Agency, in the last calendar year or financial year you have records for what is the total number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken by the Agencies' employees? Over the same period, what was the average number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken per Full Time Equivalent employee of the Child Support Agency?
2. What is the sick leave entitlement allowable to the employees of the Child Support Agency as part of the terms of their employment (under the Certified Agreement or individual contracts)?
3. Does the Child Support Agency monitor and review the employees' use of sick leave entitlement? Has this procedure changed in the past 12 months?
4. What initiatives, if any, has the Child Support Agency undertaken in the past three years to address absenteeism?

Answer:

1. For the Financial Year July 2005 to June 2006 (and as at 01 September 2006) the total unplanned leave taken by Child Support Agency employees is shown in the following table:

Type of Leave	Number of Days Leave Taken
Sick Leave (including leave with and without pay)	38,180 days
Other Unplanned Leave (including Bereavement, Carer's, Worker's Compensation and unauthorised leave)	13,909 days
Total Unplanned Leave	52,090 days

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Over the same period, the average number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken per Full Time Equivalent employee of the Child Support Agency is shown in the following table:

Type of Leave	Average Per Full Time Equivalent
Sick Leave (Average FTE for July 2005 to June 2006 is 3,183.47)	12.00 days
Other Unplanned Leave (Average FTE for July 2005 to 15 June 2006 is 3,183.47)	4.37 days
Total Unplanned Leave Days per FTE (Average FTE for July 2005 to June 2006 is 3,183.47)	16.38 days

2. For those ongoing employees whose conditions of service are contained in the Child Support Agency Certified Agreement 2005-2007, the annual allocation of sick leave is 111 hours per employee.

For those ongoing employees whose conditions of service are contained in an Australian Workplace Agreement, the annual allocation of personal leave (which can be used in time of illness) is 148 hours.

3. Yes. The Child Support Agency monitors and reviews employees' use of sick leave allocations. Additional actions have been taken over the past 12 months to address the high level of unplanned leave. To ensure all managers have greater visibility of this problem statistical tables are published on CSA's intranet site. In addition, targets for unplanned leave have been established and strategies put in place to achieve an ongoing downward trend.
4. The Child Support Agency implemented a comprehensive strategy in October 2005 to address deteriorating attendance levels. The strategy has particularly focussed on increased managerial skilling and engagement and greater staff awareness of their responsibilities in relation to unplanned leave. Key initiatives include training for all managers, detailed analysis of leave patterns in all sites and development of specific actions to address issues identified, regular reporting on levels of unplanned leave across organisational units against targets set, provision of in house rehabilitation case managers to ensure early intervention and effective return to work programs for injured employees, provision of dedicated senior project management support and development of tools to support managers to deliver on their responsibilities. The strategy is proving effective and unplanned leave has been reduced by 7% in the 05/06 year and is on track to reduce by a further 15% in 06/07.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 2 hours at an estimated cost of \$113.